

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE****HEAD SHOCK RESISTANCE AND HEAD LOAD/UNLOAD  
PROTECTION FOR REDUCING DISK ERRORS AND DEFECTS,  
AND ENHANCING DATA INTEGRITY OF DISK DRIVES**

A slider in a disk drive is shock-protected with an overcoat layer of either metal or polymer directly on the areas of the slider that are prone to contact the disk when the slider is loaded off the platform, or when the slider is shocked while in operation over the data zone of the disk. The material used to form the layer absorbs shock and reduces wear, and is bonded or sputtered to the head in a region other than the pads of the air bearing surface. This region is typically the reactive ion etched (RIE) surface area and is slightly below the pads of the air bearing surface of the head. In an alternate version of the invention, the slider is protected by covering only the edges of the slider with a suitable material. Finally, the entire slider may be encased with the overcoating except for the pads of the air bearing surface.